

REMARKS

Claims 1-49 are pending in the present application. Claims 25-29, 31-36, 38-43, 45-47 and 49 stand rejected and Claims 30, 37, 44 and 48 have been objected to. Claims 1-24 have been allowed. Claims 17, 25-30, 33, 36-38, 44, 45 and 48 have been amended herein and new Claims 50-53 have been added herein (which fall within the elected species). Reconsideration is respectfully requested in light of the present amendments and following remarks. The above amendments and following remarks are believed to be fully responsive to the outstanding Office Action and to render all claims at issue patentably distinct over the references cited.

The Examiner has rejected Claims 25-29, 31-35, 38-43 and 45-47 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Trucco (U.S. Patent No. 4,572,570). This rejection is respectfully traversed. The originally filed claims are believed to be patentably distinct over the reference cited.

Notwithstanding, independent Claim 25 has been amended to add “a tailgate movably coupled to the vehicle body to allow access to the storage compartment regardless of the position of the roof, the storage compartment being operable to hold miscellaneous and even non-roof objects” (for example and not by way of limitation, groceries, golf clubs, tools, etc.). Support for this amendment can be found at Paragraph No. [0035] and Figures 1, 11, 16 and 19 of the originally filed application. In contrast, Trucco does not teach the claimed features, especially as amended. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the instant rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 36 and 49 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Trucco and Pfertner et al. (U.S. Patent Publication No.

2002/0024230). This rejection is respectfully traversed. It is believed that the originally filed claims are patentably distinct over the cited references. There is no suggestion or motivation to combine the cited references. Notwithstanding, this rejection is deemed moot in light of the amendments to the base independent claims. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the instant rejection be withdrawn.

Furthermore, the objected to dependent Claim 30 has been amended to include its base claim (but deleting "accessible from"), with minor grammatical revisions. Also, the elements of objected to dependent Claim 37 have been added to its base Claim 33, except for minor grammatical revisions. The objected to dependent Claim 44 has been added to its base Claim 38, except for minor grammatical revisions, and the objected to dependent Claim 48 has been added to its base Claim 45, except for minor grammatical revisions. It is also noteworthy that new Claim 50 is similar to allowed Claim 10.

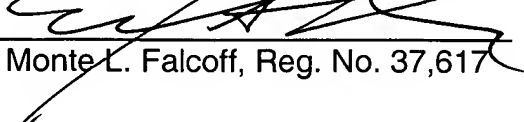
In view of the instant amendments, it is submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, it is requested that the Examiner pass the case to issue at her earliest convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: April 10, 2006

HARNESS, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.
P.O. Box 828
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48303
(248) 641-1600

MLF/cmg

By: 
Monte L. Falcoff, Reg. No. 37,617